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Rocky Flats Completes Milestone Cleanup of 903 Pad

GOLDEN, Colo., Dec. 8, 2003 – Rocky Flats workers have completed the site's largest and most complex environmental cleanup project to date. The 903 Pad was a 3.4-acre area in the southeast section of the site originally used to store several thousand drums of plutonium-contaminated cutting oils in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period many of the drums leaked, spilling contaminated oils onto the ground. The drums were removed during 1967 and 1968 and an asphalt pad was installed in 1969 to cover and contain the contamination.

The cleanup project involved removing 32,000 tons of plutonium contaminated soil and asphalt from the pad area. Nearly 1,800 intermodals or roll-off containers were filled, loaded on trucks and shipped to the Envirocare facility in Utah for disposal. The project took 13 months to complete, beginning in October 2002.

"The completion of the 903 Pad Project marks a major milestone for the closure of Rocky Flats. The processes learned during the cleanup of the 903 Pad will establish a benchmark for future remediation for the rest of the DOE complex," said Norma Castaneda, US Department of Energy environmental restoration manager.

"The workers are to be commended for their commitment to safety and the environment. This extensive soil removal project achieved a major risk reduction and is a significant accomplishment in the cleanup and closure of Rocky Flats" noted Lane Butler, Kaiser-Hill manager of environmental restoration programs.

The site will now initiate cleanup of the wind-blown area directly east of the former pad. High winds spread some contamination during previous remediation attempts and before the pad was installed in 1969. This area of near surface contamination is known as the Lip Area. Approximately 20-acres will be remediated to meet cleanup levels established by the Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement, the regulatory agreement that guides the cleanup work at Rocky Flats.

Rocky Flats is a Department of Energy-owned cleanup and closure site operated by Kaiser-Hill Company under an accelerated closure contract. The Rocky Flats mission includes the now-completed special nuclear material management and shipment, nuclear deactivation and decommissioning, waste management and shipment, environmental cleanup and site closure.